

course matters are often referred by one Assembly to another. But it comes up before the new Assembly as a new matter. Those to whom it has been referred have never had the opportunity of considering it before as an Assembly.

For example, some subject is discussed at length. The Assembly finds that it is not ready to act. This may be from lack of information, or because it does not seem propitious to take the proposed action at that time. An ad interim committee is appointed to consider the matter more fully and report its conclusions to the next Assembly. Oftentimes this committee is composed, in whole or in large part, of men who were not present and so did not have the benefit of the discussion. They consider the question, prepare their report and present it to the Assembly. It comes to this body as a new matter and frequently they are in no better position to decide it than were their predecessors in the previous Assembly.

These are but specimens of the disadvantages of the present system. Others might be mentioned.

The change which we propose, and which we believe will largely overcome these disadvantages, and in turn bring many advantages, is to make the Assembly a continuous body. This can be done by requiring the Presbyteries to elect their commissioners for a term of three years. Let it be arranged so that one-third of the members shall be elected each year. This will insure two-thirds of the number in any Assembly being men who were in the previous Assembly. One-third of them will have been in two Assemblies.

Some of the advantages of this plan seem to us very obvious. One is that the members will largely be acquainted with each other and will be accustomed to working together. This will insure a more prompt and careful handling of the business.

Another advantage will be that the Assembly which refers a matter to the next Assembly for consideration will, to a large extent, be there to take up and carry on the further discussion of the matter, having learned much in the former discussion and having had a year to think and study the subject.

A still further advantage will be that the Assembly will be composed of men of much greater average ability. We make a great deal of the claim of "the purity of the ministry" and "the purity of the eldership." In a sense this is true. In another sense it is far from the fact. It is true that all are equal before the law of the Church, as well as before the law of the land. But when it comes to the matter of ability or fitness for certain service, it is not true. One preacher may make a very successful city pastor, who would be an absolute failure in a country pastorate. One man may be a successful pastor, who would not be a successful secretary or evangelist.

God has given to different men different gifts. Some men are fitted by natural gifts and by training to handle the larger affairs of the Church, while others are not. Each department of the Church's work ought to be handled by the best men that can be secured. When a Presbytery realizes that it is selecting a commissioner to represent it for three years, it will be very apt to select one of its ablest men.

There are those who will argue that this will limit the number who can be sent to the Assembly to such an extent that many will never receive that honor. Others say that membership in the Assembly is a great education to a man. Others say that when a man has been faithful in serving the Church in the pastorate or in the eldership, he ought to

be rewarded by being given the pleasure and profit of a trip to the Assembly. These arguments are of weight. It would be a great thing for them if every preacher or elder could go frequently to the Assembly.

It should be borne in mind, however, that the Assembly is not a training school, nor should attendance upon it be considered a "junketing trip." It is the highest court of the Church. It has committed to its care and consideration matters of vital importance to the kingdom of our Saviour upon earth. All matters of personal honor or preferment or pleasure should be laid aside, if by doing so the Master's work can be better done.

This is offered as a suggestion for the consideration of our readers. If any one else has a better plan for the improvement of the Assembly, we would like to have. We suppose there are few who feel that no improvement is needed.

## Contributed

### CAN IT BE DONE?

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,  
But he, with a chuckle, replied,  
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one  
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.  
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin  
On his face—if he worried he hid it.  
He started to sing as he tackled the thing  
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed, "Oh, you'll never do that.  
At least no one ever has done it."  
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,  
And the first thing he knew he'd begun it.  
With the lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,  
If any doubt rose he forbid it;  
He started to sing as he tackled the thing  
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done;  
There are thousands to prophesy failure;  
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one  
The dangers that wait to assail you.  
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,  
Then take off your coat and go to it;  
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing  
That cannot be done, and you'll do it.

—Exchange.

### THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON WOMAN'S POSITION IN THE CHURCH AND THE PROTEST.

By Rev. W. H. Workman.

The decision of The General Assembly at Orlando Florida, reverses the historic position of the entire Church for the past two thousand years. The decision therefore is extremely, revolutionary.

The methods pursued by the leaders of the majority of the Assembly were remarkable. Five ministers were appointed by the last Assembly, J. F. Cannon D. D., R. F. Campbell D. D., A. M. Fraser D. D., W. M. Dinwiddie D. D. and James I. Vance D. D. These ministers after a careful consideration and deliberate study reported, (all except Rev. James I. Vance) agreeing that the former deliverances of the Assembly, prohibiting women speaking, exhorting or leading in prayer in the assemblies of the saints, were scriptural, Doctor Vance alone dissenting, and declaring that the scriptures do not forbid women speaking in the churches.

Doctor Vance's report consisted of two parts; 1st: The previous decisions of the Assembly, then a great array of scripture passages with his exposition of the same to disprove the historic position of the Assembly.

It was very evident that the Scriptures cited, and the radical method of interpretation adopt-

ed by Dr. Vance was too weak and unsound to sustain his position, and those who favored a departure from the historic position, and were determined to remove the shackles from women, were unwilling to go on record with these as a basis of their action, they therefore buried it out of sight by substituting for it only a portion (a part of the previous decision of the Assembly as to women being admitted to and recognized as preachers of the word) and adding thereto the following: And other services of women should be left to the discretion of sessions and the enlightened consciences of Christian women themselves.

It is manifest from the record that there is no Scripture cited to sustain the position taken; that the Scripture cited by Dr. Vance was deliberately discarded, by the majority; that the appeal in the record as fixed by the majority is one of expediency only, and the fact stated on the floor of the Assembly that the position of the Assembly was being violated by the Assembly—agencies and by the Church, and the new position would relieve the inconsistencies existing between the practice and the theory. Which is about the same logically, as if a thief should say, as my practice is not in accord with the eighth commandment, therefore I will change the commandment rather than my practice.

I call attention next to the constitutionality of the act of the Assembly. The General Assembly has in this instance as in another refused to discharge its high and solemn duties and has unconstitutionally revolutionized the government of the Church, in the following particulars: The Constitution declares "The Assembly to be the highest Court of the Church, and represents in one, all the churches thereof." \* \* \* "It constitutes the bond of union, peace, and correspondence among all its congregations and courts." Book of Church Order Par. 86. "It has power to decide all controversies respecting doctrine and discipline; to give advice and instruction in conformity with the Constitution in all cases submitted to it," Par. 90. By referring this question to the Sessions it has failed to be that bond of union, and to decide doctrines. It has stepped down from its throne of power and clothed the Sessions with a power which has been delegated to the General Assembly only. It thereby breaks the unity of the Church. It thereby refers the decision of doctrines to untrained men (elders being untrained in the careful discriminating study of matters of doctrine), the ministers of the Word are so trained being in a decided minority are compelled to submit to the decision of the Elders who are not trained.

It confers upon the sessions the power of formulating new doctrines, and new modes of worship, which is dangerous to the truth as given unto us by the Word and handed down by the fathers. In the General Assembly alone is the equality numerically preserved between the ruling and the preaching Elder.

It is inconsistent to insist upon a trained ministry and put these, as matters of worship, under power of those who have not been so fitted for such duties.

I call the attention of the sessions to Paragraph 313 of the Directory of Worship and that this debars the Sessions from encouraging females from leading in prayer in the prayer-meetings.

All the rules of interpretation of Constitutional-Law requires that every word shall have its full force and effect. The word male in this paragraph excludes every other class of members.

As sustaining this interpretation I call attention to the parallel phrase in the Constitutions of the States "male citizens 21 years of age